

Stouffville Tribune

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OPINION

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Debora Kelly

Beer commercial not needed to fill me with pride

My name is Debora and I am not American.

Long ago, during one of my family's annual seaside vacations in New Jersey, a kid from Troy, New York asked me if we had TVs in Canada. (I think he was wondering if there were outlets in igloos.)

By the end of the holiday, this kid knew how much Canadians are like Americans. We listened to the same music, watched the same TV programs, saw the same movies, played the same sports, wore the same fashions and did the same things with our friends.

Except I realized my world was so much bigger than his. For instance, I could rhyme off the last 10 presidents, while he couldn't even name the current prime minister or Canada's capital.

And that made me crack a secret smile. (Being Canadian, I was too polite to make him feel like a total idiot for his appalling ignorance.)

*Canadians have finally found
national non-identity courtesy
of Molson's latest effort.*

I have been charmed by many Americans since then, marvelled at their blind patriotism and swaggering superiority and made allowances for the ignorance those attitudes breed. Believe me, I have smiled the secret smile many times — but ya gotta love 'em.

Especially since they make you glad you're not American.

I didn't need a beer commercial to make my chest swell with patriotic pride, but many Canadians, apparently, have finally found their national non-identity courtesy of Molson's latest effort at flogging its swill. (Hey, it's a parody, guys.)

I have yet to meet an American who assumes we're all lumberjacks, fur traders or live in igloos, as Molson's Joe proclaims.

They're more likely to ask about Quebec and its quest to "secede", the state of our health-care system (which has sent some Canadians to them for care) or the debacles our peacekeepers have been involved in. They know our dollar is worth about 67 of their cents and a vast number of them work with Canadians, whose brains were drained south.

I would cheer for a commercial that could put its finger on what makes a Canadian a Canadian, beyond our own stereotypes. (Like, I don't wear a toque, eh?)

While Joe is passionately declaring he is a Canadian, what he's really saying is he's proud he's not an American.

And that, in itself, is just so Canadian, isn't it?



LETTERS

NHL players old enough to decide if visors are necessary

Have you ever been hit really hard in the face with an object moving fast enough to damage your brain or sharp enough to cut your eye into two pieces? That is a scenario that goes through the minds of all NHL players whenever they step onto the ice.

As you've probably guessed, I'm answering the question everyone has been asking: "Should face visors be mandatory in the NHL?"

They shouldn't be mandatory. Most NHL players are of legal age and can take care of themselves, and the players who aren't wear visors.

When Marian Hossa hit Bryan Berard in the eye, a storm cloud settled over the NHL. Just five games later, Igor Korolev was hit just half an inch below his left eye by Chris Chelios.

The incidents caught the attention of Sergei Berezin, who now wears a visor, and Mike Johnson of the Tampa Bay Lightning, who now wears a full-face cage.

In college hockey you must wear a face cage and in the Canadian juniors it is also mandatory.

If the players' parents sign a waiver, the player is allowed to wear only a face visor; never can they have a bare face.

Goaltenders only started wearing face protection after Jacques Plante was hit in the face with a puck. Will it take something that drastic to get players to wear the protection?

Another reason for facial injuries is stick control of other players.

There were more than 75 stick-use-related penalties in the first round of the playoffs this year, and two stick-use suspensions. Alexie Zhitnik and Chris Simon were the two offenders, each receiving a game for their conduct.

In other sports, such as baseball, people have been hit by balls in the head and face, and do you see them wearing protection for that? Not a chance.

If people are so concerned about NHL players who make more than \$2 million a year, then why don't they stop worrying, sit back, relax and enjoy life.

Players should wear face protection by choice and not by force.

CAMERON MCINTOSH
MARKHAM

Sidewalks are for everyone, so be polite to all users

I read with disbelief the ongoing letters back and forth regarding the problems joggers are causing for walkers on sidewalks. Get real, guys.

As a jogger of 15 years or more, I have encountered many people on sidewalks and have found everybody to be extremely polite and courteous. Both my husband and I will either go single file or right off the path to accommodate walkers. We are, in response, greeted with smiles and nods of courtesy.

The streets and sidewalks are for everyone to enjoy. Aren't there enough pressures in life, without finding negatives in a leisurely stroll?

Let's all try to be just a little more accommodating toward each other.

KIM ECKERSLEY
UNIONVILLE

Put politicians on the list of people who need annual testing

So now the Ministry of Education is going to go over the heads of its own government-appointed body, the College of Teachers, to test our teachers annually. And this is how they spend our hard-earned tax dollars wisely? I think not.

I am sick and tired of the way teachers are made to feel like cheap second-class citizens in our society and I think it is high time we had an accountability test for politicians.

Teachers, like other professionals, spend years training. What training does a politician have to have? A big mouth for false smiles, the

gift of the gab to get you out of any corner and win you big-buck backers and very little else.

What about a test for integrity? For honesty and trustworthiness? For down-to-earth common sense? For hard work and sensitivity?

Are these not the qualities Janet Ecker is suggesting she will test teachers for in the fall? Teachers are always berated for their "long holidays."

How many days in a year do our provincial and federal politicians actually spend in the House conducting the business of running our country?

Did I not read recently that Mike Harris managed to put in an appearance only 37 times at Queen's Park in the last year?

And yet we cannot allow our teaching staff time during the day to prepare, mark or remediate with their students, time that is sorely needed if only to re-juvenate and regain one's breath after spending a morning of trying to teach more than 30 nine-year-olds to understand the complexities of writing a coherent sentence correctly, with accurate spelling, punctuation and diversity. Notwithstanding the fact that many of these children still do not have a grasp of the spoken English language.

Though this letter will undoubtedly be brushed off as just another teacher-generated tirade, stop and give some careful thought to the ideas of testing our politicians annually.

Remember, it is these untested and uneducated people who are making decisions for each and every one of us, from selling Hwy. 407 to a private company that now wants to hike the toll to selling off our health system to private clinics to charge as they please for medical procedures, for which we pay our taxes.

SHELAGH HARRIS
RICHMOND HILL

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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